

especially if we have to rob Social Security to do it, has to stop.

Additionally, the reductions in federal reimbursements to hospitals that are contained in this legislation are not acceptable. Hospitals in northern West Virginia are already being paid at some of the lowest Medicare rates in the country; we should not be making it even harder for the hospitals to provide quality healthcare to our seniors.

Again, since this bill was loaded up at the last minute with several items which I have already strongly supported throughout this Congress—including jumpstarting the Keystone Pipeline, relaxing EPA regulations on boilers, extending and reforming unemployment benefits and other government programs, and preventing a scheduled 27% cut to doctors' Medicare reimbursement rates—it is simply unacceptable to continue the president's misguided economic theories at seniors' expense.

This bill has a long way to go despite the short timeframe in which Congress is operating, and if significant changes are made, it may be worth another look. But I came to Washington to get something done, create jobs, and restore common sense to the process. Unfortunately this particular bill fails that test.

RECOGNIZING THE YOEMEN MARCHING BAND OF CAMERON HIGH SCHOOL IN CAMERON, TEXAS

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the Yoemen Marching Band of Cameron High School who placed third out of the 297 bands in state 2A marching competition in San Antonio on November 7, 2011.

The 97 member band is under the direction of Stephen Moss, head director, and Craig George and Danielle Roberts, assistant directors. Only ten bands performed in the finals competition, and the Yoemen Marching Band received a 1st place vote from all five judges, which advanced them to the UIL State Marching Contest in San Antonio for the first time in the history of the school. The band competed in the preliminary competition at the UIL State Marching Contest, which advanced them to the finals portion of the competition. The Yoemen Marching Band came in 2nd place behind the two time champion Queen City.

This 2nd place finish advanced the band to the highly coveted finals competition that same evening. The Yoeman High School Marching Band was also selected to play at the World War II Memorial in Washington DC and was one of the ten bands selected to play in the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Parade this past spring.

I congratulate the Cameron High School Yoemen Marching Band on their accomplishments and I am proud to represent them in the United States Congress.

RECOGNIZING THE SEMI-FINALISTS FOR THE ASIAN AMERICAN SUCCESS YOUTHCON SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor to rise today to recognize the finalists of the 2011 Asian American Success (AASuccess) YouthCon Scholarship program. Each year, AASuccess grants scholarships and recognition awards to 6 students in the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area.

Founded in April 2006 by Dave Nguyen, Irina Nguyen, David Montanari, Sumesh Kaushal and Malou Gemeniano, the missions of AASuccess are to promote academic excellence of young Asian American and other minority students, foster mentorship and partnership between career professionals and student members, and promote "The Act of Giving Back" in the Asian American community. AASuccess offers 4 different programs to achieve their goals; the AAS Life Skills Academy, Scholarship Program, Giving Back Program, and the Arc360 Web TV Program.

Scholarships are awarded in amounts ranging from \$500.00 to \$1000.00, and winners are selected based on academic performance, civic engagement, and completion of an essay. Using famous images from Saigon for inspiration, the theme for this year's essay asked applicants to consider their freedom, and the connection between protection of personal freedoms and civic duties. This thought provoking topic has encouraged students to reflect on and consider some of the most crucial questions we face today.

While there will be 6 scholarship winners, it is my great pleasure to recognize the following 12 finalists:

Ms. Sungmin Sohn; Mr. Vihanh Tham; Ms. Khanh-Ni Thi Nguyen; Ms. Mai Ly; Ms. Julie Hoang; Mr. Dylan Vu; Mr. Tristin Tran; Mr. Maxwell Tran; Mr. Minh Pham; Ms. Kirby Taylor; Ms. Julia Ngoc-Kim Nguyen; Ms. Krystal Sing.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding the efforts of these students, and in congratulating them on their academic and civic accomplishments. I also commend AASuccess for their efforts to ensure and encourage professional development and success of students in our community.

MIDDLE CLASS TAX RELIEF AND JOB CREATION ACT OF 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, during this Season of Giving, when our nation should be reflecting on the need of friends and neighbors who are out of work and struggling to provide for their loved ones, this chamber will vote today to cut unemployment benefits for one million of our fellow Americans.

The House Majority's bill, H.R. 3630, would eliminate several tiers of benefits, created

under the Emergency Unemployment Compensation program, which has provided up to 99 weeks of support for those who lost their jobs through no fault of their own.

If this legislation becomes law, the maximum potential unemployment benefit will fall to 59 weeks.

This legislation would also allow states, many of which are struggling to balance their budgets, to reduce the average weekly amount available to beneficiaries.

I am strongly opposed to any reduction in emergency unemployment insurance.

This Congress cannot and must not adjourn for the holidays and go home to tell our unemployed neighbors that the richest country on earth cannot find a place in their heart to help them in their time of need.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I am not able to support H.R. 3630 even though I am a strong supporter of moving the Keystone XL Project along and would support the language included in this bill if considered separately.

The Keystone XL project makes both energy and economic sense for our country, and I hope that the Administration could find a way to allow for construction to commence in some of the states while simultaneously revisiting the route in Nebraska.

I urge my colleagues to stand in support of the millions of our fellow Americans struggling to find work and to oppose this legislation.

HOUSE DEMOCRACY PARTNERSHIP

HON. DAVID DREIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, when I was first elected to this body in 1980, the preeminent national security threat that gravely concerned us all was the Soviet Union. A decade later, as we know very well, the Soviet Union collapsed and the Cold War came to an end. As we quickly near the twentieth anniversary of that transformative event, we should not forget the role that the United States Congress played in supporting democratic development in the legislatures of many of the former Warsaw Pact and Soviet republics. The Frost-Solomon Task Force partnered with the newly democratically elected members of post-Soviet legislatures to offer support and guidance in building an independent, co-equal legislative branch of government. A key part of that effort was the role our Congressional Research Service played in building strong, independent, nonpartisan research and analysis capabilities for these nascent institutions. Many of these countries are now members of NATO, the European Union, and in some cases, the Eurozone. They are fully integrated into the Trans-Atlantic partnership.

However, the work of democratic development in the region is not over. I have the privilege of leading, along with my friend and colleague Rep. DAVID PRICE, the House Democracy Partnership (HDP). Our commission is committed to helping strengthen legislatures in new and re-emerging democracies by engaging with our counterparts throughout the world. Two of our partner countries are Ukraine and the Republic of Georgia. Both are former Soviet republics working to consolidate their democracies. To date, their efforts have been